Morley, Ian. "Displacing the Laws of the Indies with the City Beautiful: Daniel Burnham's 1905 Plan for Manila." *Spatial Histories of Occupation: Colonialism, Conquest and Foreign Control in Asia*. Ed. David Baillargeon and Jeremy E. Taylor. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. 51–70. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350257023.ch-002>>.

Downloaded from Bloomsbury Collections, www.bloomsburycollections.com, 26 April 2023, 00:36 UTC.

Copyright © David Baillargeon and Jeremy E. Taylor 2022. Released under a CC BY-NC-ND licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). You may share this work for non-commercial purposes only, provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher, and provide a link to the Creative Commons licence.

Displacing the Laws of the Indies with the City Beautiful: Daniel Burnham's 1905 Plan for Manila

Ian Morley

Introduction

From 1565 to 1946, Philippine society was subject to foreign colonial rule. As part of the colonization process, urban planning practices were introduced: under Spanish annexation, given the ratification of the Laws of the Indies in 1573, new urban communities arranged around church-lined central plazas were established. After 1898, as a basic component of American colonial governance, the grand City Beautiful planning model was applied. Whilst there has been much descriptive explanation as to the physical character of colonial built fabrics in the Philippine Islands before and after 1898 in the existing literature, much detailed analytical data is still absent. What, for instance, inspired the American colonizers to radically redesign Philippine towns and cities, e.g. the capital city of Manila? Where did their inspiration come from? Why did they consider it imperative to fundamentally alter both the physical form *and* meaning of the local urban environment?

To answer such questions, and to place modern American city planning within the frame of the evolution of Philippine civilization after 1898, this chapter will focus on three issues. First, it will consider the architect-planner Daniel Burnham (1846–1912) who, after visiting the Philippines in late 1904 and early 1905, imported City Beautiful planning rationality into the Philippines. As part of this analysis, the chapter will examine Burnham's 1905 plan for Manila – the American colonial government's first attempt to refashion a Philippine urban settlement. Secondly, with direct reference to Digital Humanities tools, the work will appraise Burnham's Manila report as a literary document. This will

help to identify how the text, whether intentionally or not, spoke of Philippine cultural advancement. Given that cultural theorists such as Theodor Adorno have argued that to think of societal administration is to think of cultural change, and that to think of cultural change is to think of societal administration, such a line of reasoning has pertinence given that Burnham's report was written to help facilitate the modernization of Philippine society *and* the implementation of efficient governance in conjunction with the display of the esteem of the American colonial regime. Finally, the chapter will draw attention to the environmental features constructed by the Americans in accordance with Burnham's 1905 report, namely the impressive boulevards with their monumental vistas, new green public spaces and monuments. Ultimately, offering a fresh understanding of how Burnham's Manila project articulated the development of Philippine society, the chapter seeks to broaden the discourse on the Philippine colonial urban form within the wider discussion about urban space under colonialism in Asia – a discussion that is addressed by a number of other contributors to this volume. Accordingly, this chapter intentionally veers away from traditional, structuralist-influenced architectural and spatial historical narratives so as to analyse and explicate Burnham's grand planning scheme.

Spanish Manila

The history of the Philippines as a colonized territory commences in 1565. From that time until 1898, the Philippine Islands were under the control of the Spanish settlers who, as part of their quest to develop local civilization, promoted Christian conversion, cultural change and the economic exploitation of the Indigenous peoples (*indios*). However, fundamental to Spanish colonization of the Philippines was the bringing of the *indios* 'under the bells' via the establishment of new urban settlements. Developed in accordance with the Laws of the Indies (*Leyes de Indias*), passed by King Philip II in June 1573, more than 1,000 new urban communities had been formed by 1898. Designed to be both beautiful and utilitarian, the Spanish colonial urban form was dominated by a central plaza (*plaza mayor*) from which a grid plan of roadways was arranged (Mundigo and Crouch 1977: 248–9). Lined by a church (which occupied its own block of land) (Nuttall 1921: 744) as well as other public edifices and the homes of the local colonial elites, the construction of plazas along with grid plans had, by 1898, left an impressive physical imprint on Philippine society. Yet, as important as the Laws of the Indies had been to the development of

Philippine society before the fall of the Spanish Empire in 1898, by the early 1900s a new urban design model was being instigated. Devised by the American architect-planner Daniel Burnham, this new urban planning paradigm was to profoundly affect the spatial morphology of the Philippines' largest city, Manila.

To come to terms fully with why, after the fall of the Spanish in the Philippines, the American colonizers sought to redefine the character and meaning of urban places there, it is first necessary to know what the Laws of the Indies sought to accomplish, as well as to grasp American perceptions of their new colony *c.* 1898. It must be acknowledged that, from the 1570s, the Laws of the Indies had an impact on life in the Philippines in a number of ways. First, land was confiscated from the *indios* and redistributed to Spanish colonists. Second, to bring the 'natives' into new settlements, the Spanish enacted a forced resettlement policy (known as *reducción*). Third, new settlements were designed in accordance with a *traza* (plan). And fourth, a hierarchical system of settlement was enacted so that those of the highest social standing could reside at the core of colonial settlements. Towards the urban fringe, in outlying districts known as *arrabales*, people of the lowest social orders were to be found.

In the case of Manila, where the Laws of the Indies were applied following a major conflagration in the early 1580s, reconstruction afforded an opportunity to effect the imagery of what an ideal Spanish colonial capital city in Asia should be (Morley 2018: 35–6). Hence, by the end of the sixteenth century, Manila, with its 2-kilometre-long stone perimeter walls and new buildings of brick, stone and tile, differed significantly from the collection of wooden edifices and *nipa* (plant leaf, wood, thatch) huts that had comprised the settlement up to 1571 (when Manila was granted the status of Spanish colonial capital city of the Philippine Islands). As I have argued elsewhere, owing to the Spanish developing Manila as a major trading hub within their transcontinental empire, the local population rapidly grew in terms of both size and racial composition from about 2,000 people during the mid-1570s to, by about 1600, almost 30,000 people. 'The establishment of the walled city, surrounded by a substantial moat, in visual terms epitomized the evolution of Manila following the onset of Spanish colonization' (Morley 2018: 36).

To the Spanish, the walled city known as Intramuros ('within the walls') held great symbolic meaning. Its imposing outer walls, its fort, its public buildings and its plazas verified the presence and might of Spanish colonial rule in Asia. As the seat of Spain's colonial government in the Philippines, Intramuros was also the nucleus of the Catholic Church in the Philippine Archipelago, an exclusive residential district, and a military stronghold. By the seventeenth century, it was one of the most important urban centres in Spain's enormous, geographically

Figure 2.1 Entrance to Intramuros, Manila, 1906. Photo by Smith Collection/Gado/Getty Images.

dispersed empire. However, the Indigenous population, as well as the Chinese and Japanese who comprised the vast majority of people in Manila by 1600, resided in land surrounding Intramuros known as Extramuros ('outside the walls'). This area, at least to the Spanish, represented a place where lesser civilization was found. Even though these outlying districts were associated with cultures of a lower status, within them important mercantile activities that were critical to the sustainability of Manila occurred. Furthermore, in the Extramuros, where people were ethnically segregated for the purpose of Spanish military control and cultural transformation, a distinct urban morphology was established. As with Intramuros, central plazas with churches were laid out, and streets were arranged in accordance with grid plans. As I have noted elsewhere (Morley 2018: 39), in this context 'the prominence of churches was not just about establishing architectural monuments to God's glory. The presence of churches at the heart of new urban communities framed Catholicism directly within the milieu of colonial power.'

By the end of the 1800s, numerous Philippine towns and cities had a reputation for insanitary living. Writing in 1899, for example, Joseph Stickney noted the widespread presence of disease. Manila in particular, noted G.J. Younghusband (1899), had a reputation for filth, squalor and contagion. Crucially, however, such perceptions were confirmed by American surveys of the city and country at the

outset of American colonial rule. By way of illustration, *A Pronouncing Gazetteer and Geographical Dictionary of the Philippine Islands* (1902) identified a host of sicknesses plaguing urban life and noted that of the nearly 18,500 buildings that comprised Manila's urban environment at the start of the twentieth century, more than 12,100 were described as 'shacks' with an additional 1,100 being labelled 'bad'. Moreover, the first United States census of the Philippines in 1903 noted that the average life expectancy in Manila – allegedly the most advanced of all urban places in the Philippines Islands – was just 20.8 years. This reality was to leave a deep imprint on the Americans when it came to the management and development of Manila in the early 1900s.

Daniel Burnham and the renewal of Manila

Broadly speaking, the literature on the American colonial era in the Philippines gives the impression that in June 1905 the greatest American city planner of the late-1800s and early-1900s tendered a monumental city plan to assist the colonial government to show off its authority and prestige as a 'great civilizer' (e.g. Hines 1974; Klassen 1986; Lico 2010; Ebro 2013). Whilst it is undeniable that the 1905 Manila Plan by Daniel Burnham (with assistance from Peirce Anderson) certainly contained elements that enabled the American colonial regime to glorify its alleged capacity to 'uplift' local people and their civilization, to merely reduce the planning proposal to this undermines the true nature of it. The scheme, formally known as the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' (published by the US Bureau of Insular Affairs), explicitly revealed what Manila as a modern colonial capital city should be. Two questions must therefore be asked: what did the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' actually say? And why did it say what it did?

It is easy to state from reading the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' that Burnham merely sought to establish a new type of urban layout in Manila, one in the guise of the City Beautiful exemplar that had already been implemented in American cities such as Washington, DC, Cleveland and Chicago (Wilson 1980: 171). Yet such a statement misses much of the bigger picture as to why the Americans in the early 1900s sought to reform the Philippine capital as – to reference the aims of this very volume – a 'space of occupation'. It also gives little indication as to the nature of the wording of the 1905 report. With this in mind, this chapter seeks to provide a fresh overview of the document via textual analysis, and by doing so open a new window through

which to rethink the purpose of American colonial city planning in the Philippines' most important urban centre.

Nine pages in length and comprising seven main sections that contain almost 7,000 words, Burnham and Anderson's 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' offers a textual occasion to breakdown the physical and symbolic structure of Manila as the American colonial capital in Asia. Providing a frame for the expediting of efficient governance, the 1905 report also sought to convert Manila into a spatial laboratory so that cultural, economic and political advancement in the nation at large could transpire in the future. However, to comprehend the meaning of Burnham and Anderson's city plan, three broad points must be acknowledged. These matters, in my view, affected what Manila post-1905 was physically to become, and hence what the restructured urban environment was to signify. Firstly, American colonial governance was formed to implement social betterment by both education and example: Manila after 1905 was to be an environmental exemplar of 'progress'. Secondly, the use of urban planning as an instrument of colonial administration was by no means accidental. In the early 1900s, the Americans were discussing means to elevate the environmental condition of the Philippine capital (Morley 2018: 54). Thirdly, in alliance with the two above points, Burnham purposefully intended to use his Manila plan as an urban design template. Based on city planning and landscape architecture already undertaken in the United States, the Manila scheme thus was to act as the model for future colonial construction in both the Philippine capital and in the colony at large.

From 1901, the Americans oversaw a number of environmental transitions within Manila. These included improving the quality of local roadways, developing the port, expanding the water and electricity supply systems, constructing new market buildings and tenements, introducing new regulations to control outbreaks of fire and disease, and beautifying the city. Given President William McKinley's 'Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation' (21 December 1898) with its ambition to 'uplift' and 'civilize' the Filipinos, if wide-ranging societal transformation were to come about then the environmental nature of urban places had to be radically altered. To be precise, Philippine towns and cities had to shift away from the plazas and churches that glorified Catholicism to new public edifices and spaces that, in contrast, promoted civic secularism. Burnham's 1905 city plan was to play a vital role in accomplishing this end. It was to help free Filipinos from their allegedly 'uncivilized' state of being, unify them into a single cultural collective, and to convey that the American colonizers were genuine in their responsibilities as 'civilizers'. More to the point, the 1905 plan

would be a means to modify not just the condition of the capital but the nation as well: as Manila was the hub of Philippine society, the American colonizers believed that to impart 'advancement' within it would inspire change/'progress' within the provinces. In environmental terms, 'New Manila' was to be defined no more by Intramuros and the physically separated *arrabales* in Extramuros, but rather by a new civic core, new public buildings, parks, parkways and statuary, as well as a new road system that would present the city as a site united across the Pasig River that had turned its back on the past, openly embracing the 'modern' and 'progressive'.

With regard to its vocabulary, the most commonly-used environmental, design and planning-related words in the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' are 'city' (used fifty-two times), 'Manila' (thirty-nine), 'street' (twenty-five), 'buildings' (twenty-three), 'center' (twenty-two), 'river' (twenty-one), 'water' (twenty-one), 'building' (twenty) and 'parks' (nineteen). The use of such words emphasized Burnham and Anderson's effort to establish a City Beautiful urban fabric lined with green spaces and playfields, to lay out new thoroughfares to tie together hitherto detached districts situated north and south of the Pasig River, and at the urban core to construct a range of public building types. They were all to be sited against the backdrop of an outstanding natural tropical environment which included Manila Bay and the Pasig River and its estuarine inlets. Significantly too, when noticing where such words are sited within the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' it becomes possible to identify word trends.

With regard to the issue of lexicon connections when identifying the location of words such as 'park' within the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' it is possible to observe words that include 'location', 'located', 'parkways' and 'boulevards': new tree-lined roadways were to perform the function of not only tying downtown and suburban districts together but also to supply easy access to new green spaces laid out throughout the city. Moreover, as Figure 2.2 demonstrates, when the word 'building' is employed in the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' it is typically used in conjunction with words such as 'beautiful', 'sites' and 'group', i.e. this articulated the planners' attention to the grouping of public edifices for the outcome of obtaining visual beauty. For this reason, to comprehensively decipher the meaning of Burnham and Anderson's 1905 document, there is a need to go beyond being mindful of their design recommendations. It is also necessary to comprehend how the vocabulary used in their report was exercised and to recognize the origins of their city plan. To this end it is important to break down the history and nature of City Beautiful urbanism in the United States.

Figure 2.2 Lexicon associations for the words ‘river’, ‘parks’ and ‘building’ in the ‘Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila.’ By the author.

In widespread use by 1900 (Wilson 1980: 170), the phrase ‘City Beautiful’ related to a complex ideology that encouraged Americans to see urban beauty as much more than the mere adornment of public spaces and buildings. Encouraging architects to develop groups of public or semi-public edifices from the 1890s onwards, City Beautiful planning came to affect the appearance, configuration and meaning of the large-sized American city. Inspired by French Beaux Arts design practices and placing great value upon monumentality and orderly-formed civic districts, City Beautiful planning bequeathed a new urban image for American society. This new vision for US cities was largely defined by the concepts and practices of one person – Daniel Burnham.

As the City Beautiful movement had developed during an age of rapid, unregulated urban growth that resulted in American cities being characterized

by poverty, corrupt local governments, overcrowding and poor housing, its proponents (such as Burnham) aspired to implant environmental dignity and civil and moral order into the American built fabric. Making use of classical architecture and planning forms to counteract the perceived ugliness and moral deficiency of contemporary American cities, Burnham's schemes for the World's Fair (Chicago, 1893) and Washington, DC, in 1901–2 demonstrated to the American public the effectiveness of grouping buildings and open spaces in orderly relation to each other. As scholars such as John Reys (1965: 24) have indicated, the beauty of the World's Fair layout and the impressive monumentality of the renewed American capital city enriched the American public. Transpiring at a time of rising American economic power and international political importance, Burnham's grand plans as much as offering a means to solve existing urban predicaments conjured the nation's ambitions and newly-found imperial image: the Mall in Washington, DC – a wide, long, tree-lined lawn offering vistas to the Capitol Building, Washington Monument and White House. The Mall, more than any other environmental feature in the city, epitomized the beauty/urban improvement now sought by Americans. Such a green space, subsequently copied across the country in cities such as Cleveland (Hines 1972), led to the rise of a perception that equated urban beauty in the form of orderly sequences of classical buildings and symmetrically-formed open spaces with an elevated form of citizenry (Morley 2010: 237). As such, Burnham's planning model for Manila could not only stimulate social progress but additionally abet social harmony. Such a role was critical in Manila given that the application of the Laws of the Indies had resulted in different ethnic groups living in spatial isolation from each other.

Returning to Burnham and Anderson's 1905 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila,' attention can now turn to breaking down its structural form and thematic content and discussing the report's references to the historical context. Without doing this, the subsequent textual analysis in this chapter will simply present itself as unsystematic and, as a result, will be detached from the reality in 1905 of the nature of colonial governance instituted by the Americans.

The opening section of the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila,' comprising 500 or so words, refers to the founding of Manila as the Spanish colonial capital (in 1571), the nature of Manila's topography, and the political conditions in the city at about the time in which Burnham and Anderson had composed the document. In addition, the text lays bare the purpose of the 1905 city plan and report. Described by William E. Parsons (1915: 14) as an American guide for Manila's future development, Burnham and Anderson's report recommended five basic environmental transitions:

1. The laying out of new parks and parkways;
2. The establishment of a new street system;
3. The development of the waterfront;
4. The creation of suburban resorts; and
5. The use of the Pasig River and *esteros* (estuarine inlets) for transportation.

The majority of the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' – approximately 5,500 words in all – discusses the five environmental features and how they might be implemented, with each environmental component being an individual section of the report. In consequence, when examining the document, there is the potential to simply describe what Burnham and Anderson suggest for Manila's future growth and environmental transformation. As a point of illustration, one may simply state that for the section entitled '(2) Street Systems', Burnham and Anderson advise that Intramuros' entrances must be widened or that the new road system throughout Manila will have the effect of reducing traffic congestion as well as linking together previously detached urban districts. However, in putting forward such descriptions, the actual meaning of the planners' recommendations for the future management of the city might be missed. With respect to the matter of widening the city wall entrances, for example, whilst traffic flow evidently was to be enhanced by the entry points being enlarged, it is also vital to note that airflow was to be improved. This was viewed in early-twentieth-century Philippine society as assisting in elevating public health conditions in the capital. Furthermore, with respect to the section of the report labelled '(1) Development of Water Front, Parks, and Parkways', it could be argued that Burnham and Anderson simply recommended the erection of new public buildings, which were to be grouped together, and the laying out of green spaces throughout the built fabric. This, one might suggest, was simply a tactic by the American colonial regime to visually embellish Manila in City Beautiful fashion and thus to demonstrate its capacity to fundamentally alter the city, e.g. by creating new public spaces. However, new open spaces such as parks, the river-side drive along the Pasig River, and playfields were to have numerous functions: first, open space was to be used to dignify important buildings; second, green spaces were to enable the populace to have new sites to engage in leisure activities; third, open spaces provided sites for statuary and fountains; fourth, fountains were to be used to help form micro climates so that the local population could have new opportunities to take refuge from the intense tropical climate; and, fifth, new open space was to be created by, for instance, filling in the insanitary Intramuros moat. As to the importance of this particular point, two

matters deserve attention: by the time of the commencement of American colonization, the moat had a reputation for being a source of local disease; and, by establishing lawns at the foot of the city walls, the structural objects of Spanish imperial might would be devalued. No longer were such sites to be seen or read as icons of Spanish authority within Manila. Now, in contrast, they would be sites for breathing in the sea breeze and taking leisurely walks (Morley 2021: 294) or, in the context of City Beautiful, sites for different social classes to come together and interact. Motivated by the success of establishing playfields in the southern districts of Chicago, Burnham and Anderson in their report (1906: 629) remark that such open spaces would positively contribute to the development of civic life because people would have locations in which to come together. With a rise in community sentiment and in conjunction with the augmentation of civic pride it was believed that the crime rate would therefore drop (as it had done in Chicago).

The 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' argues that for life within Manila to improve new infrastructure would be required, e.g. the port and train system needed to be enlarged, and new bridges had to be built. Nonetheless, to understand why infrastructure development was so fundamental to the reform of Manila, it is imperative to understand the nature of life in the city c. 1900 and also the nature of American colonial governance in the Philippines. As starting points, it must be remembered that by the time of the fall of the Spanish Empire, Manila dominated political, cultural and economic activities in the Philippines. Its demographic scale was many times larger than other cities in the country, and what transpired within Manila had national ramifications. As the urban settlement ranked first in the Philippines in terms of both size and importance (Brown 1900: 47) to activate reform in the capital meant showing the capacity to influence conditions of life within the Philippines more broadly. In addition, as touched upon earlier, Manila in 1898 was perceived by the Americans as being beset by 'backwardness' and a generic lack of 'advancement'. According to President McKinley's Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation (which emphasized the American colonial aim of uplifting Filipinos and 'civilizing' their society) the American colonizers had not only to change existing cultural and economic structures but also the physical environments in which Filipinos lived to thoroughly enrich the well-being of their colonial subjects. Accordingly, the new road layout in Manila was to do more than just enhance traffic circulation: the new roads, constructed from asphalt instead of the mud and stone highways that had characterized the roads built during the Spanish colonial era – i.e. thoroughfares that, during the wet season, were impassable – were to aid people

to move more freely and comfortably around the city. This, clearly, had benefits for citizens and businesspeople. Likewise, the estuarian inlets (*esteros*), which by the early-1900s comprised a mix of stagnant and polluted mud and water, were to be dredged, widened and cleaned up after 1905, and their banks were to be rebuilt. 'So treated,' remarked Burnham and Anderson in their 1905 report, 'they will offer an economical and unobjectionable means of freight handling that will greatly contribute to the prosperity of the city' (1906: 634).

Then again, to comprehensively grasp the American quest to grant social and economic betterment, cognizance of the historical context is needed. For example, it must not be neglected that Burnham and Anderson's Manila improvement report was completed shortly after the Americans had introduced the *tranvia*, an electric-powered form of transport said to show off the modernization of Manila under American control (Pante 2014: 863). The introduction of such new forms of public and private transport were to articulate the transition borne from the colonial handover from Spain to the United States in the late 1890s.

A basic feature of Manila's new road system was tree-lined boulevards. Linking downtown districts with the outer quarters of the city, these thoroughfares were to also provide grand vistas. As to why new sightlines were weighty in the frame of Manila's transformation/modernization, it must be remembered that

Figure 2.3 *Tranvia* in Manila, early 1900s. Photo by Vintage Images/Getty Images.

Burnham and Anderson recommended the building of a new civic core that was to be sited in Extramuros. Helping render Intramuros politically obsolete, Extramuros, as the heart of a 'new nation', showcased the upgrading of the city as a true site of 'advanced civilization'. Notably also in this milieu, where pre-1898 Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines had a reputation for authoritarianism, corruption and oppression, the Americans aspired to show their brand of governance as being in polarity. Importantly, however, the Americans also sought to demonstrate that they were in the Philippines not to exploit the country or to remain there forever. Instead, they had come to Asia on moral grounds – to impart 'progress' so that, ultimately, the Filipinos would be able to successfully take on the responsibilities of self-rule. As I have discussed elsewhere, Manila from 1905 was to purposefully have a spatial form and appearance that diverged with what it had pre-1898: 'The creation of long, straight, and sometimes broad thoroughfares, and the integration of landscape architecture with the man-made environment, was a major component of this transition' (Morley 2018: 62–3). Boulevards permitting the public to see sometimes long distances towards prominent public edifices, such as the Capitol, enabled all Filipinos (irrespective of age, social standing or life experiences) to individually and collectively observe governmental institutions operating on their behalf (Morley 2018: 78).

On this point, three matters need to be accentuated. First, establishing views to prominent urban features permits the local community to 'own' (in abstract terms) what they see. Second, a design that enables seeing new environmental features accentuates that what you see is not only real but belongs to the now. Finally, by everyone having the capacity to see architectural objects and use public spaces within the new built fabric there is no racial discrimination as to who the viewers are as 'Filipinos'. Consequently, the Indigenous population, as well as the Japanese, Chinese and other groups, all of whom had, under the Spanish *reducción* policy, been separated into their own quarters in Extramuros, were now all able to freely live and move about the city given that the American colonial regime identified them all as citizens of Manila. In this political-cultural setting, the new design of Manila was critical to helping the Americans promote a paradigmatic form of modernity – a brand of societal modernization that, amongst other things, enabled Filipinos to see and understand that the Spanish colonial era and all its negative connotations had been banished to the past forever.

Commonly viewed as a planning document, the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' discusses, via the means of environmental reform, social engineering. The implementation of the City Beautiful paradigm informs

how American colonial rule intended to take life away from the 'lesser civilization' associated with the Spanish colonial era. With its symbolic meanings and pragmatic intentions, Burnham and Anderson's environmental renewal scheme sought to establish transitions that would help to embolden Filipinos to see themselves for the first time as an 'us'. This bonding, following the implementation of the 1905 improvement report, was enhanced by the placement of statuary in newly created public spaces, e.g. in the Washington, DC-esque Mall (today's Rizal Park, situated immediately to the west of the proposed Capitol Building's site).

The erection of statuary revealed how the Americans were prepared to associate the colonial-built environment's restructuring, and hence society's post-Spanish evolution, to notions of 'Filipinism'. With the erection of a monument to the Filipino national hero José Rizal (1861–96) in the most important public space in 'New Manila' in 1913, the colonizers purposefully manufactured a rallying point for the local population *and* founded a site to help literally and metaphorically sustain Rizal's belief that Filipinos belonged to a single political-ethnic collective. Additionally, to recognize why a statue of Rizal in the centre of 'New Manila' took on so much value to the Filipinos (and to the Americans), one must consider in the post-1898 context the grasp of government people held: for the Americans, the purpose of democratic administration, both in North America and the Philippines, was to protect citizens, give them security

Figure 2.4 Rizal Monument, Manila, 1922. Photo by Smith Collection/Gado/Getty Images.

and grant social benefits which, for instance, were previously unimaginable to Filipinos. For Filipinos, government should be formed so that it provides welfare and civil rights for people (Malcolm 1916: 21–2). To accomplish these goals, bureaucrats must, as a rule, listen to the views of the public and then follow their suggestions, because citizens are best qualified to comprehend society's wider wants and needs.

Social progress and the theory of culture

In being able to comprehend the meaning of environmental and cultural developments as an outcome of governmental change, the theory of culture has great pertinence and value. Thanks to the use of theory, new insights into societal evolution can be forged because it is important to appreciate that culture and administration exist in proximity to each other. As a result of this reality, if a government employs city planning to assist in bringing about cultural change/development, a dialectic can emerge that endorses the perception that social justice cannot transpire unless formerly unregulated environmental elements in society become, in literal terms, planned. Considering that Burnham and Anderson's 1905 document described environmental conditions at that time alongside their 'obvious possibilities' as to the advancement of Philippine society (1906: 635), and that during the early 1900s there was 'the opportunity to create a unified city equal to the greatest of the Western world, with unparalleled and priceless addition of a tropical setting' (1906: 635), it is impractical to assess the 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' without coming to terms with what Burnham and Anderson wanted Manila to physically become. As textual analysis from software such as Voyant Tools discloses, architecture in 'New Manila' was to not cast off Spanish traditions established long before 1898. Tiles, mentioned six times in the short section 'Future Building Materials', for instance, were still to be used for roofing, and small window openings and overhanging upper floor levels were still to be a basic element of building design. In respect of why Burnham and Anderson made such recommendations, it is important to consider issues not only of aesthetics or the low cost of widely-used building materials but also the need for buildings to have protection from the hot tropical climate. Hence, if adhering to the viewpoint that as the Americans after 1898 were seeking to instigate wholesale changes within Philippine society and that this had to equate, with respect to architecture, to the use of modern materials extensively used in the United States, one might immediately misread what the

'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' is actually about. One might assume that, as 'great civilizers', the Americans would introduce building materials such as iron, steel and concrete (those modern materials used in the industrial urban centres of North America). However, as already noted, Burnham and Anderson understood the role/significance of climate and the cost of materials in the Philippines. As a result, their report ventured to encourage an economic and efficient system of architectural and urban development, not one grounded in the heavy use of materials that were fashionable in the United States at the time (that is materials wholly unsuited to conditions – climatic and economic – existent in Southeast Asia).

Claiming a new destiny for *Manileños*, Burnham and Anderson's 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila' was, to paraphrase Hartmut Rosa (2015), to inspire 'cultural acceleration'. However, as indicated with respect to the theme of architectural design, American colonial governance did not operate in such a fashion whereby it rejected all things Spanish and promoted all things American. This is why social change and modernization in the Philippines from 1898 was an amalgam of gradualistic and paradigmatic components although there was great propaganda value to the implementation of social reform for the American colonizers. Cultural, political, economic and environmental development helped present the Americans as 'doers'. And through the introduction of 'advancement', such as in the form of urban environmental layouts devised from City Beautiful planning concepts and practices, it presented them as cultural 'victors' who could present and entrench modernity. Using new public buildings, lounging in new green spaces, seeing new vistas, living a longer, healthier life and using new forms of transport, all expressed societal evolution because, as de Certeau has indicated (cited in Buchanan 2000), the enacting of a new spatial system creates a discontinuity: the 'consuming' of the new city through means of new transport types, new leisure facilities, greater social class intermingling and new vistas, actualizes the fact that the past has – literally and metaphorically – gone, and a new direction for society's present and future has emerged.

David Harvey (2010) argues that the enactment of modernity needs to be fathomed in reaction to the crisis-ridden experiences of space and time. Given that in 1898, when the Americans first acquired political control of the Philippines, the new colonizers perceived Manila as a place defined by 'backwardness', so the instigation of democratic politics, the application of new transport technologies, the expansion of the economy and the restructuring of the built fabric were used to accelerate metamorphosis so that 'primitiveness' could be eliminated. So, as scholars such as Fritz Reheis (1999) argue, because

culture is continually developing – albeit at different times and at different speeds (due to the varying impacts of technological and organizational innovation) – change within society must always be viewed through two contrasting yet complementary lenses: the psychological and the environmental. Shifting the nature of one, states Reheis, will have an impact on the other. For this reason, to simply describe the contents of the ‘Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila’ misses what it is truly saying. Without reading the report as its authors intended it to be read means downplaying what it is actually saying from the American colonial governmental standpoint.

Conclusion

As the first urban planning-related document exclusively dedicated to Manila and its environmental form, the ‘Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila’ sought to establish a cityscape far removed from the one that had existed during the Spanish colonial era. After 1905, and thanks to the recommendations of Daniel Burnham and Peirce Anderson, Manila was to be characterized by long, straight roadways, impressive vistas towards civic edifices and large green public spaces. Yet as a much-referenced document/city plan, the 1905 report still has much to inform. Through the application of textual analysis tools, new information about Manila as a space of colonial occupation can be gleamed. The report can reveal itself in ways hitherto not seen. Consequently, textual tools can offer a new window through which to consider both the form and meaning of ‘New Manila’ – what it structurally was to become, and what that structure in the setting of cultural evolution represented. It also provides new opportunities to rethink the urban variable, this being the concept within the field of urban history that seeks to explore and explain the relationship that cities and civilizations have upon each other. Put simply, a modern Philippine nation was to emanate from its modern, planned capital city. One could not exist without the other.

As shown in this chapter, the ‘Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila’ exhibited the need for a new spatial character within the Philippine capital. Accordingly, it provided a sense of environmental separation between Spanish-era Manila and the American-regulated city. Of course, for the American colonizers, the physical changes that Burnham and Anderson recommended held meaning as to the removal of ‘primitiveness’ and its replacement with modernity. Whereas pre-1898 Manila was viewed by the Americans as archaic

and filled with socio-economic problems and environmental challenges, post-1905 Manila was a site where 'progress' – cultural, economic and environmental – as well as civil freedoms unattainable under Spanish colonial authority could be enjoyed. More to the point, as the Americans perceived the Spanish colonial era as being a time characterized by backwardness and oppression, through Burnham and Anderson's strategy to reform Manila's built environment, civilization for Filipinos was to be upgraded. But what was the upgrading? As cultural theorists like Theodor Adorno (1991) have explained, to know language is to know culture, and to know culture is to know societal administration. With this perspective in mind, time and attention must be given to comprehensively grasping the language, structure and meaning of the report. Without doing so, any explanation of Manila's City Beautiful urban form will not be as thorough as it should be, and Manila, as a 'space of occupation', will not be appreciated in a manner becoming of its history and evolution in the lead-up to independence in 1946.

References

- Adorno, T. (1991), *The Culture Industry. Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, New York: Routledge.
- Brown, G.W. (1900), *Pearl of the Orient: The Philippine Islands*, Boston, MA: Dana Estates and Company.
- Buchanan, I. (2000), 'Walking in the City', in G. Ward (ed), *The Certeau Reader*, 101–18, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Burnham, D. and P. Anderson (1906), 'Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila', in *Fifth Report of the Philippine Commission, Part 1*, 627–35, Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Ebro, J.M. (2013), 'Organizing the Colonial Outpost: American Re-Establishment of Manila's Architecture from 1900–1906', *Espasyo*, 5: 42–9.
- Harvey, D. (2010), 'The Enigma of Capital and the Crisis of Time', paper presented to the American Sociological Association on 16 August 2010, Atlanta. Available online: <http://davidharvey.org/2010/08/the-enigma-of-capital-and-the-crisis-this-time/> (accessed 4 November 2019).
- Hines, T. (1972), 'The Imperial Façade', *Pacific History Review*, 41: 33–53.
- Hines, T. (1974), *Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Klassen, W. (1986), *Architecture in the Philippines. Filipino Building in Cross-Cultural Context*, Cebu City: University of San Carlos Press.

- Lico, G. (2010), *Arkitekturang Filipino. A History of Architecture and Urbanism in the Philippines*, Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press.
- Malcolm, G.A. (1916), *The Government of the Philippine Islands: Its Development and Fundamentals*, Rochester, NY: The Lawyers Co-Operative Publishing Company.
- Morley, I. (2010), 'The Cultural Expansion of America: Imperialism, Civic Design and the Philippines in the Early 1900s', *European Journal of American Culture*, 29 (3): 229–51.
- Morley, I. (2018), *Cities and Nationhood: American Imperialism and Urban Design in the Philippines, 1898–1916*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Morley, I. (2021), 'Spatial Change and the Cholera Epidemic in Manila, the Philippines, 1902–4', in M. Gharipour and C. DeClercq (eds), *Epidemic Urbanism: How Contagious Disease have Shaped Global Cities*, 289–96, Bristol: Intellect Books.
- Mundigo, A.I. and D.P. Crouch (1977), 'The City Planning Ordinances of the Laws of the Indies Revisited. Part 1: Their Philosophy and Implications', *The Town Planning Review*, 48 (3): 247–68.
- Nuttall, Z. (1921), 'Royal Ordinances Concerning the Laying Out of New Towns', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 4 (4): 743–53.
- Pante, M. (2014), 'Mobility and Modernity in the Urban Transport Systems of Colonial Manila and Singapore', *Journal of Social History*, 47 (4): 855–77.
- Parsons, W.E. (1915), 'Burnham as a Pioneer in City Planning', *The Architectural Record*, 38: 13–31.
- A Pronouncing Gazetteer and Geographical Dictionary of the Philippine Islands* (1902), Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Reheis, F. (1999), *Die Kreativität der Langsamkeit*, Darmstadt: Primus.
- Reps, J.W. (1965), *The Making of Urban America*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rosa, H. (2015), *Social Acceleration: A Theory of Modernity*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Stickney, J.L. (1899), *Admiral Dewey at Manila*, Philadelphia, PA: J.H. Moore, Co.
- Younghusband, G.J. (1899), *The Philippines and Round About*, London: MacMillan and Co. Limited.
- Wilson, W.H. (1980), 'The Ideology, Aesthetics and Politics of the City Beautiful Movement', in A. Sutcliffe (ed), *The Rise of Modern Urban Planning 1800–1914*, 166–98, London: Mansell.